SUPERMAN
ACTION COMICS

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EXPR
DAILY
SIX FORTY-FIVE EXPRESS TO DAILY PLANET PULLING INTO STATION!
ALWAYS ON TIME. YOU MAKE THE BIG BOSS HAPPY. GOOD ETHICS.
ESTAMPA
SOIR
HSR
HERE. I KEEP INSIDE, DRY ON HEATER. STUFF UNDER COAT FOR WALK. IT MAKE YOU WARM.
YOU'RE TOO GOOD TO ME, VALENTIN.
BAH! YOU BRING ME CUISINE!
I HOPE SO. SALMON AND CAPERS QUICHE. I'M A LITTLE SKEPTICAL.
IS PERFECTO, MISTER CLARK. MARIBELLA WILL YELL FOR MAKING MY CHOLESTEROL UP, BUT AT LEAST I DIE A HAPPY FAT MAN.
WISH HER LUCK ON HER FINALS FOR ME. I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HER THIRD YEAR ALREADY.
TIME FLIES WHEN IT IS NOT STANDING STILL, YES? HEY, SPEAK OF FLYING -- -- DID YOU HEAR WHAT SUPERMAN DID ON WEEKEND?
QUICHE
EH? EH? WOW.

WAS STANDOFF, YES? SUPERMAN ON THIS SIDE AND THIS ELITE ON OTHER SIDE. YOU MUST SEE, ON ALL TV.
YES, I THINK I CAUGHT IT -- BUT REALLY I HAVE TO GO --
ESTAMPA
SOIR
SO THEY GO TO MOON --

-- AND THIS MONSTRUO, EH -- KANCER HE SMASH THROUGH THE PLANET! I KNOW YOU NOT THERE, 'CAUSE YOU MISS YOUR PAPER --
TOUCH OF THE FLU. Y'KNOW, VALENTIN, I CAN'T BE LATE --
YOU NEED MORE VITAMINS. MARIBELLA PRESCRIBE SOME WHEN SHE A DOCTOR. SO, SUPERMAN --

THEY SAY PLUTO EXPLODES! CAN YOU BELIEVE? GONE --
-- BUT HE SURVIVE! WHAT A MAN, EH? EH? WOW.
I CAN'T IMAGINE --
THIS IS EVERY DAY? GOOD GOD... WITHOUT CAFFEINE I'D STAB MY EARS OUT WITH A PENCIL...

JUST TRYING TO HELP WHERE I CAN, VALENTIN. YOU PROVIDE A GREAT SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD, AND I THOUGHT YOU COULD USE A HAND REBUILDING.
I... EH...
WOW.

MARIBELLA... SHE WAS SO CLOSE. I DON'T KNOW IF SHE FINISH THE MEDICAL SCHOOL NOW.
BUT A CHILD IS A BLESSING. A BLESSING.
FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME ABOUT HER, I THINK SHE'LL DO GREAT. NOT TO MENTION SHE HAS YOU.
ONE DAY, YOU HAVE CHILDREN, MISTER CLARK, AND YOU KNOW THE GREATEST JOY, THE GREATEST PAIN.

YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT SOME? I CAN PICK OUT THE BROCCOLI IF YOU LIKE --
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN. NO THANK YOU. GET TO WORK SO YOU NOT IN TROUBLE. NO PINK SLIP FOR NEW YEAR.
OKAY... VALENTIN, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
...
BUENO, MISTER CLARK. BUENO.

EXCUSE ME... WHERE IS VALENTIN?
WHO?
VALENTIN. HE WORKS HERE. USUALLY. I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN A FEW DAYS --
NAH. HE DON'T WORK HERE ANYMORE. DUNNO WHAT HAPPENED...

"...HE'S JUST GONE."

BIG CITY little man

Doomed Planet Krypton. The rocket. A child. Journey across cold space. Earth. Smallville. Crash-landing. The Kents. Learns TRUTH, JUSTICE and THE AMERICAN WAY. Faster than a Speeding Bullet. Stronger than a Locomotive. A Man can fly. Believe.

SUPERMAN in ACTION COMICS!

"There are Three Million people living in Metropolis. They are the background players in your life, keeping your 'set' alive with noise and bodies and smells and traffic and laughter and yells. If one day, one of the regulars simply wasn't there, you probably wouldn't notice. Who would?

"There are Three Million people living in Metropolis, and YOU are a background player in THEIR lives.

"If one day, you simply weren't there... Who could notice?"

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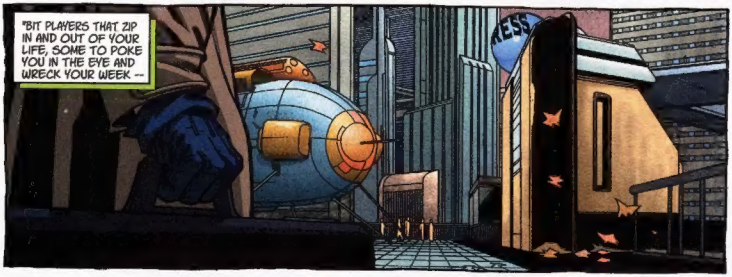
SUPERMAN?
WHAT?
SORRY, I HEAR YOU, WONDER WOMAN -- IS THIS IT?
...
IS THAT A JOKE?
WHY? WAS IT FUNNY?
HYSTERICAL.
NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND, CRACKS ARE FORMING IN THE MOUNTAIN'S CAP DESPITE MY FORTIFICATIONS --
-- AND I'M STARTING TO SWEAT, SO WOULD YOU PLEASE PUT THE GREAT KAMEHAMEHA BACK TO SLEEP?
SOMETHING TROUBLING YOU, SUPERMAN? YOU SEEM DISTRACTED.
HSSSSSSS
ME? WE JUST SAVED TWO MILLION HAWAIIANS... WHAT COULD BE BOTHERING ME?

"PEOPLE LEAVE, CLARK. IT HAPPENS, ESPECIALLY IN A PLACE LIKE METROPOLIS.


"BIT PLAYERS THAT ZIP IN AND OUT OF YOUR LIFE, SOME TO POKE YOU IN THE EYE AND WRECK YOUR WEEK --

"-- OTHERS TO BE SWEET BREATHS OF FRESH AIR WHEN THE CITY SEEMS TOO UGLY TO BEAR --

"-- AND THEN THEY GO.
"EVEN ENDEARING LITTLE SPANISH NEWSPAPER MEN. IT HAPPENS."

HE'S COSTA RICAN. NOT SPANISH. AND NO, I DON'T KNOW HIS LAST NAME. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE HE LIVES. I WOULDN'T SAY WE WERE EVEN "FRIENDS"-- NECESSARILY--
BUT HE WAS ALWAYS THERE... AND NOW HE'S NOT...
AND YOU SAVED TWO MILLION PEOPLE TODAY, AND YOU WANT TO KNOW IF IT NEEDS TO BE TWO MILLION AND ONE.
OBVIOUSLY IT'S EATING AT YOU, CLARK. IT WOULD HAVE TO BE FOR YOU TO SET FOOT IN HERE SO SOON AFTER --
LOIS DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT CLARK AND PERRY'S SECRET DEAL IN SUPERMAN #183 -- ED.
A "HUNCH," I'M STILL ALLOWED TO USE THAT ONE, RIGHT?
EVEN IF I'M NOT A "REPORTER FOR A MAJOR METROPOLITAN NEWSPAPER" ANYMORE?
SAINT SMALLVILLE... SIGH OKAY.
WE GO.
WE GO WHERE?
YOU HAVE A "HUNCH," YES? FOR A STORY ON MY BEAT?
WE GO WHEREVER I SAY WE GO.

LATER, IN METROPOLIS'S "LITTLE HISPAÑIA" DISTRICT...
I DON'T WANT TO SEEM... UNGRATEFUL, LOIS, BUT WAS THAT ROUTINE OF YOURS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY?
"ROUTINE"? I'M CERTAIN I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, CLARK KENT.
I WAS CONDUCTING A SERIOUS INTERVIEW WITH THE OWNER OF VALENTIN'S NEWSPAPER KIOSK, TO GET HIS ADDRESS --
-- THE FACT MY PEN WAS SO SLIPPERY AND I HAD TO KEEP PICKING IT UP IN FRONT OF HIM WAS A COMPLETE COINCIDENCE.
I'M STARTING TO REMEMBER WHY WE WORKED DIFFERENT BEATS.
BE THANKFUL IT WAS JUST A LITTLE SKIN, AND I DIDN'T HAVE TO PICK ANY LOCKS. YOU WOULD HAVE BROKEN OUT IN HIVES.
I'M ASKING PERRY TO MOVE YOU TO FINANCIAL. VERY BORING WORK.
YEAH, THAT'LL HAPPEN.
HERE WE ARE. YOUR MAN'S CASA. DO YOUR PEEPING TOM THING AND FEEL WARM AND FUZZY, SO WE CAN EAT LUNCH.
SECOND FLOOR --
RIGHT?
JUNIO

HE MISSED MY BIRTHDAY. THAT WAS WHEN I KNEW.
IT'S NOT THE SORT OF THING PAPA DOES.
THEN, I CALLED. AND CALLED. AND I WENT OVER. AND HE DIDN'T COME HOME.
THE POLICEMEN WHO CAME WERE VERY APPRECIATIVE THAT I WAITED MORE THAN 24 HOURS BEFORE CALLING THEM.
THEY ASKED THE RIGHT QUESTIONS. PAPA HAD NO ENEMIES. ONLY A FEW FRIENDS. NO PLANS TO TRAVEL. NO DRUGS. NO DRINKING. NO VICES OF ANY SORT.
THERE WAS NO SIGN OF A STRUGGLE. NOTHING STOLEN.
THEN, THEY LEFT. THAT WAS ALMOST THREE WEEKS AGO NOW.
I'M CERTAIN THAT HE'S DEAD. I JUST... I JUST WANT TO BURY HIM.
WHY? HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?
I ALREADY TOLD YOU...
... HE MISSED MY BIRTHDAY.

THAT WAS SOME "HUMOR" YOU OUGHT TO BE A REPORTER.
HOW ARE YOU DOING?

I WANT TO FIND HIM, LOIS. CAN --
-- CAN WE DO IT? CAN WE --
BDEETBDEET

NO. NOT NOW.
NOT NOW!
BDEET BDEET
CLARK!

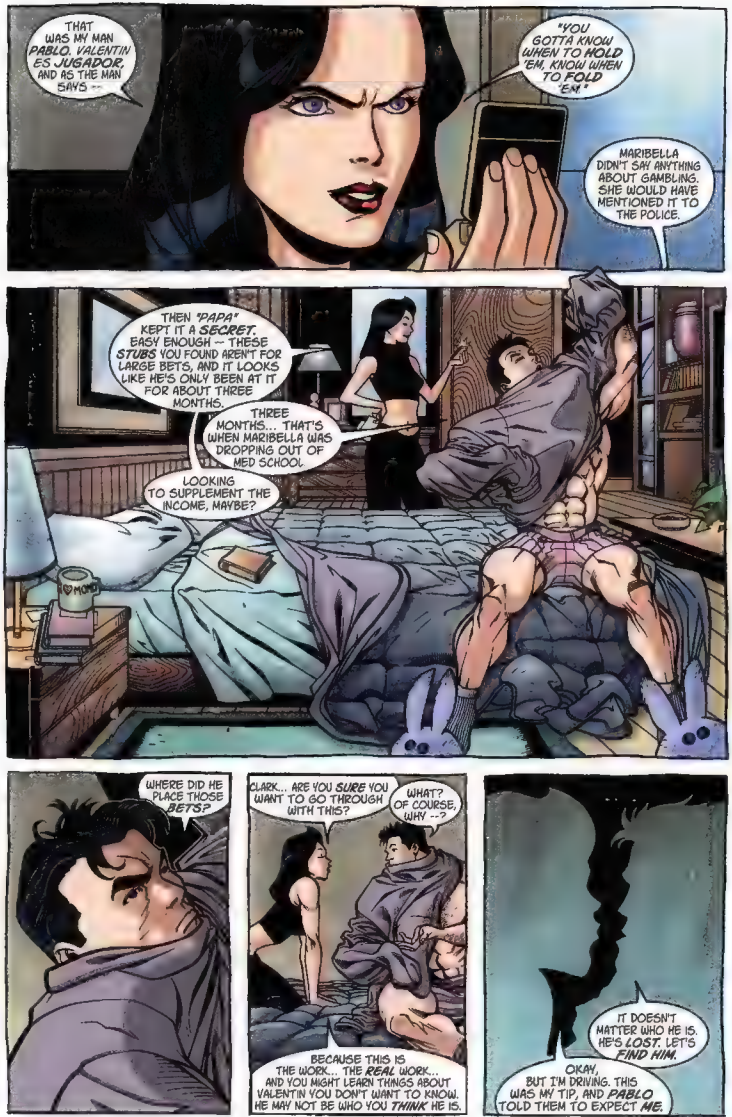
I WANT TO FIND HIM. NOW. HE'S A PERSON, NOT JUST A FACE. I --
I KNOW, BUT WHATEVER THEY'RE CALLING YOU FOR... THAT IS A JOB FOR SUPERMAN...

THIS IS NOT.
THIS IS A JOB FOR LOIS AND CLARK. I GET THE FIRST SHIFT. OKAY?

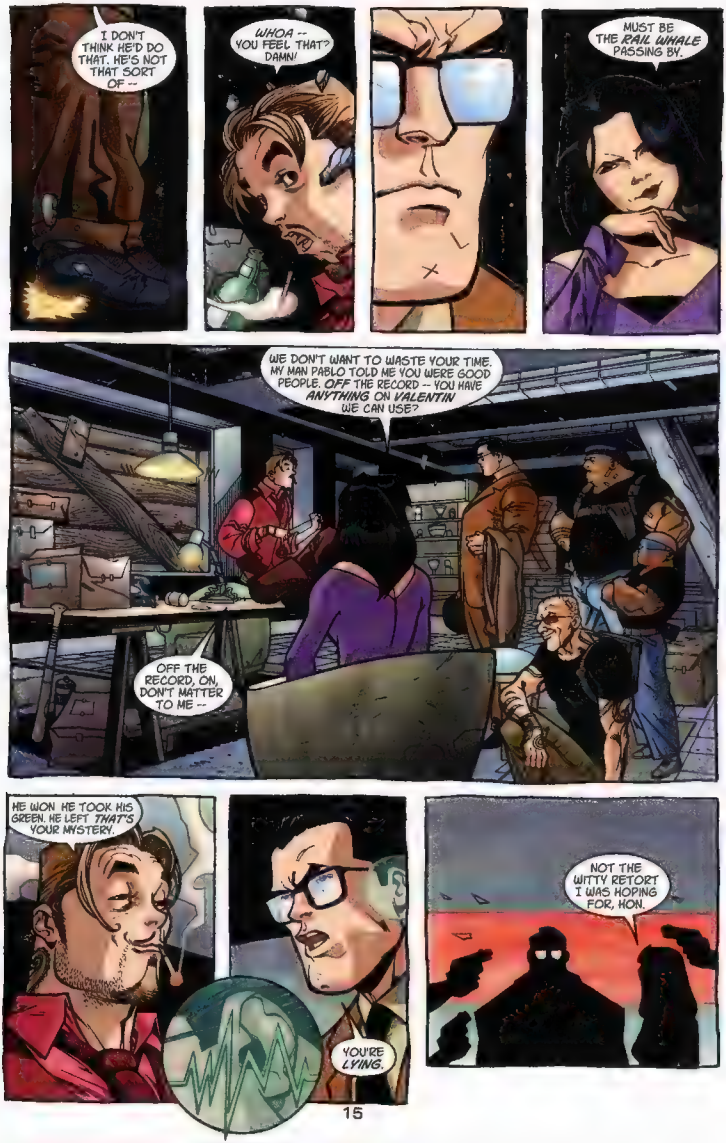
OKAY.

AS A GENERAL RULE, ADULT MALES WHO GO "MISSING" DO SO ON PURPOSE. CONSIDER IT A POSSIBILITY YOUR MAN WON'T WANT TO BE FOUND.
CONSIDERED, BUT I DOUBT IT.
FINE. IF THE M.P.D. TRAIL IS COLD, YOU HAVE TO BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING. WITH THE MISSING HIMSELF.
LOOK WHERE THEY DIDN'T, AND MOST LIKELY, YOU'LL DISCOVER EITHER WHY HE RAN, OR WHY HE WAS ERASED.
THANKS. I APPRECIATE THE TIP.
HERE'S ONE MORE
YOU CAN'T SAVE THEM ALL. YOU KNOW THAT.
NO ONE CAN.
HE KEPT MY PAPERS WARM WHEN IT RAINED. HE BORED THE HECK OUT OF ME WITH HIS STORIES AS HE ATE MY BREAKFAST.
... AND I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HIS FULL NAME UNTIL HE DISAPPEARED.
I MAY NOT SAVE THEM ALL... BUT I WANT TO SAVE THIS ONE.

IS IT STILL BREAKING AND ENTERING IF THE OWNER IS MISSING?
SORRY, VALENTIN... I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND --
NO VICES.
NUMEROS DIARIOS


THAT WAS MY MAN PABLO. VALENTIN ES JUGADOR. AND AS THE MAN SAYS --
"YOU GOTTA KNOW WHEN TO HOLD 'EM, KNOW WHEN TO FOLD 'EM."
MARIBELLA DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT GAMBLING. SHE WOULD HAVE MENTIONED IT TO THE POLICE.
THEN "PAPA" KEPT IT A SECRET. EASY ENOUGH -- THESE STUBS YOU FOUND AREN'T FOR LARGE BETS, AND IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S ONLY BEEN AT IT FOR ABOUT THREE MONTHS.
THREE MONTHS... THAT'S WHEN MARIBELLA WAS DROPPING OUT OF MED SCHOOL.
LOOKING TO SUPPLEMENT THE INCOME, MAYBE?
I ♥ MOM
WHERE DID HE PLACE THOSE BETS?
CLARK... ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH THIS?
WHAT? OF COURSE, WHY --?
BECAUSE THIS IS THE WORK... THE REAL WORK... AND YOU MIGHT LEARN THINGS ABOUT VALENTIN YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW. HE MAY NOT BE WHO YOU THINK HE IS.
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO HE IS. HE'S LOST. LET'S FIND HIM.
OKAY, BUT I'M DRIVING. THIS WAS MY TIP, AND PABLO TOLD THEM TO EXPECT ME.

HE WENT HOME.
TOOK ME FOR A BUNDLE TOO LUCKY DUCK.
HE HIT THE BIG ONE AND TOOK IT ALL BACK TO HIS "COUNTRY."
THEY ALWAYS WANT TO GO BACK TO THEIR "COUNTRY," RIGHT? MAKE THE SALAD HERE, THEN BACK TO FARM DIRT OR WHATEVER THEY DO.
HE HAS A PREGNANT DAUGHTER. I DON'T THINK HE'D LEAVE HER --
FUNNY. HE TOLD ME SHE WAS AN EMBARRASSMENT. AIN'T MARRIED, RIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU WERE AMIGOS OR NOTHIN', BUT THOSE PEOPLE DON'T TAKE TO OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BAMBINOS. I RESPECT THAT.
TOLD ME HE WAS GONNA KICK HER OUT.


I DON'T THINK HE'D DO THAT. HE'S NOT THAT SORT OF --
WHOA -- YOU FEEL THAT? DAMN!
MUST BE THE RAIL WHALE PASSING BY.
WE DON'T WANT TO WASTE YOUR TIME. MY MAN PABLO TOLD ME YOU WERE GOOD PEOPLE. OFF THE RECORD -- YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON VALENTIN WE CAN USE?
OFF THE RECORD, ON, DON'T MATTER TO ME --
HE WON. HE TOOK HIS GREEN. HE LEFT THAT'S YOUR MYSTERY.
YOU'RE LYING.
NOT THE WITTY RETORT I WAS HOPING FOR, HON.

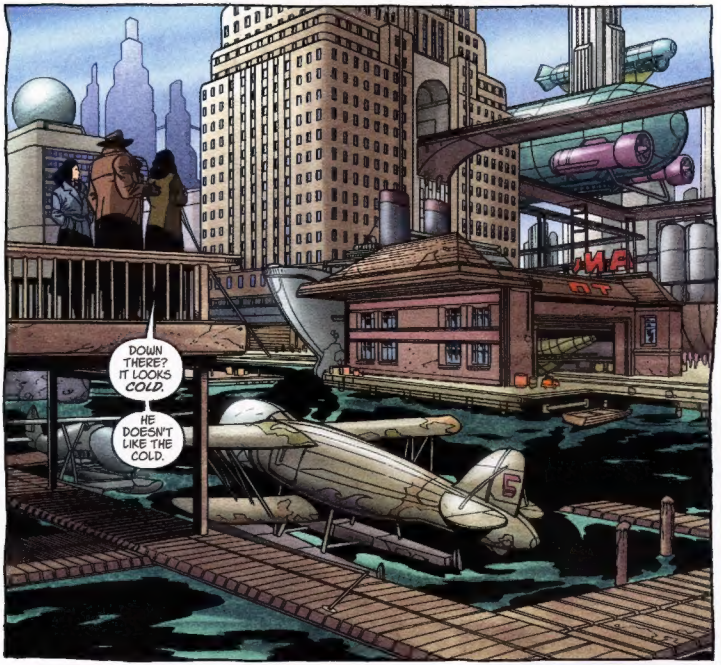
NOPE. VALENTIN'S NOT THERE EITHER... YOU GONNA STICK WITH THIS TECHNIQUE, OR DO WE TRY SOMETHING ELSE?
I'M SORRY, LOIS. I... HE'S LYING.
AND HE WAS YOUR LEAD.
HE WAS MY LEAD AND HE'S LYING AND --
AND YOU CAN'T PROVE IT.
NO. NOT IN COURT. BUT I KNOW.
I COULD MAKE HIM TALK TO ME.
COULD YOU? COULD YOU REALLY DO THAT -- -- AND SLEEP AT NIGHT?
I WISH I WAS HITTING SOMETHING BIG.
IT'S SO MUCH EASIER TO JUST HIT SOMETHING BIG.
HOW DO THEY DO IT? DETECTIVES... POLICEMEN...
HOW DO THEY DEAL WITH THE LIES AND THE... INHUMANITY?
SAME AS YOU DO... THEY BELIEVE THAT THE TRUTH COMES TO LIGHT... THAT IT MUST...

"...AND THEY NEVER GIVE UP."
MEN AND BOOTY

WHAT?!
YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, SAY IT!

HOW DOES IT FEEL?
WHAT?!
TO BE MISSING FROM YOUR OWN LIFE?
WHEREVER YOU GO, I GO. YOU'RE A SUPERMAN MAGNET.
NO ONE FROM YOUR WORLD WILL SPEAK TO YOU.
NO ONE WILL LOOK AT YOU.
YOU ARE INVISIBLE TO THEM.
ARE YOU GETTING THE PICTURE?
YOU'RE LOST IN YOUR OWN WORLD. UNLESS YOU HELP ME FIND SOMEONE.
VALENTIN REYES.
HE WON.
THE STUPID LUCKY SAP WON... AND I COULDN'T COVER THE BET.

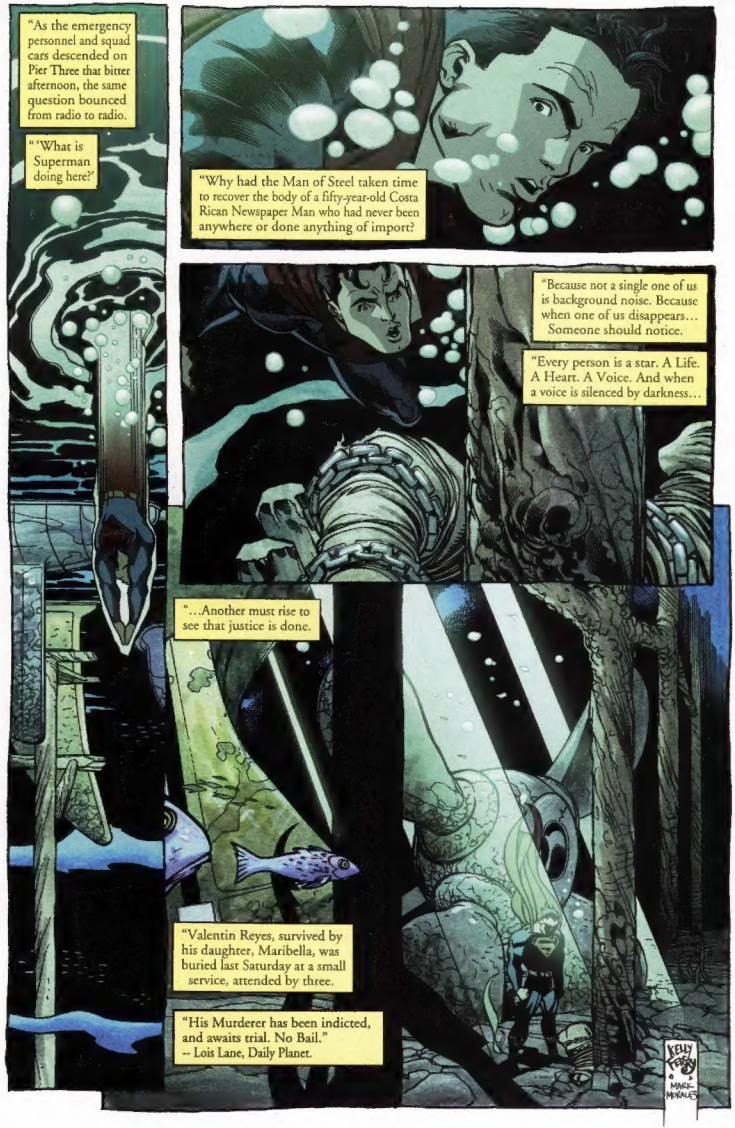
LUCKY, LUCKY IDIOT —
YOU COULDN'T COVER THE BET?
LONG SHOT. THE LONGEST. I — HE BROKE ME. BUT YOU CAN'T DO BUSINESS BROKE.
LUCKY BUM. I HAD TO PAY HIM. HAD TO PAY OUT. I TRIED TO GET HIM TO ROLL IT OVER — MOST GUYS ROLL IT OVER.
HE GAVE ME SOME LINE ABOUT A DAUGHTER. DAUGHTER "LA DOCTORA."
HE WOULDN'T LEAVE THE MONEY WITH ME. I HAD TO PAY.
ONLY THING WORSE THAN LOSING YOUR BANK IS NOT PAYING. WRECKS THE REP.
I HAD TO PAY... SO I PAID...
AND I TOOK IT BACK. AND I SAID HE WENT HOME. AND HE DIDN'T.
I LAUGHED AND SAID HE WENT HOME WITH MY MONEY.
HE WAS JUST A GUY WORKING A NEWSPAPER SHACK.
WHO WOULD MISS HIM?
WHO WOULD CARE?


DOWN THERE? IT LOOKS *COLD.*
HE DOESN'T LIKE THE COLD.

DO YOU KNOW... *WHY* IT HAPPENED?
YES, BUT WE CAN TALK ABOUT THAT *LATER.*

OKAY. ARE THE *POLICE* COMING NOW?
THEY'LL BE HERE SOON, BUT... CLARK...

... CLARK HAS A *FRIEND* WHO WANTS TO HELP.


"As the emergency personnel and squad cars descended on Pier Three that bitter afternoon, the same question bounced from radio to radio.
"What is Superman doing here?"
"Why had the Man of Steel taken time to recover the body of a fifty-year-old Costa Rican Newspaper Man who had never been anywhere or done anything of import?
"Because not a single one of us is background noise. Because when one of us disappears… Someone should notice.
"Every person is a star. A Life. A Heart. A Voice. And when a voice is silenced by darkness…
"…Another must rise to see that justice is done.
"Valentin Reyes, survived by his daughter, Maribella, was buried last Saturday at a small service, attended by three.
"His Murderer has been indicted, and awaits trial. No Bail."
-- Lois Lane, Daily Planet.
KELLY FREENY
MARC MONAHEE